United Nations ST/IC/2008/35*

Secretariat

24 July 2008

Information circular**

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **2008 competitive examination for Chinese-language translators/ verbatim reporters**

1. The purpose of the present information circular is to invite applications from staff members of the Secretariat at the P-3 level and below who wish to take the competitive examination for Chinese-language translators/verbatim reporters in 2008, in accordance with the provisions of ST/AI/1998/7 and ST/AI/2000/1, as amended by ST/AI/2003/1.

2. The competitive examination for Chinese-language translators/verbatim reporters will be held tentatively on **24 November 2008** in Beijing, Geneva, New York and other locations, according to the number and location of qualified candidates convoked for the examination. The purpose of the examination is to establish a roster from which present and future vacancies for Chinese-language translators/verbatim reporters will be filled. When vacancies occur in a service, successful candidates will be recruited from the roster for that service, subject to the requirements of the service in terms of expertise and language combinations.

3. The examination is open to staff members of the United Nations at the P-3 level and below who meet the eligibility requirements, as well as qualified external candidates. Staff members from subsidiary organs of the United Nations and staff members whose service is limited to a particular organ, fund or programme of the United Nations or to special missions are considered external candidates for the purpose of this examination. Such candidates, if successful in the examination, will be offered a new appointment with the United Nations subject to normal United Nations recruitment procedures and standards. Staff members who are successful and are selected for inclusion in the roster will be assigned to fill vacancies for Chinese-language translator/verbatim reporter posts as they occur in the language services in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Nairobi and Bangkok. Assignments are subject to rotation and successful candidates may thereafter be called upon to serve at other United Nations duty stations according to the needs of the Organization. Successful candidates are expected to serve **a minimum of five years** in language

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posts. The assignment of staff members of the United Nations who are successful in the examination and are selected to fill vacancies will be subject to the conditions set out in paragraphs 14 to 17 below.

4. Staff members of the Secretariat applying for the examination must:

(a) Have Chinese as their main language;[1]

(b) Have a perfect command of Chinese and an excellent knowledge of English. Knowledge of other official languages of the United Nations (French, Arabic, Russian or Spanish) will be regarded as an asset. The Board of Examiners, appointed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, requires that candidates' claims to knowledge of official languages be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files. Staff members who have been enrolled in a United Nations language course in any of the languages claimed must have passed the United Nations language proficiency examination in that language. Candidates who have not attended the United Nations language courses in the languages claimed must substantiate their claims to knowledge of those languages. For that purpose, staff members should give a clear explanation on the P.11 or personal history profile (PHP) form of how they acquired their knowledge of the languages claimed;

(c) Hold at least a three-year first-level degree from a university or institution of equivalent status in which Chinese is the language of instruction;

(d) Have knowledge of word-processing programs.

5. In order to meet the Organization's need to recruit staff for language posts who will serve for a reasonable period of time before reaching retirement age, staff members who do not serve on 100-series appointments and who will have reached the age of 56 by the deadline for submission of applications (3 September 2008) will not be eligible to sit for the examination. There is no age limit for full-time staff members serving on 100-series appointments.

6. The requirement of a degree from a university or institution of equivalent status stipulated in paragraph 4 (c) above may be waived for staff members who, in the judgement of the Board of Examiners, have adequate post-secondary education qualifications from a university or institution of equivalent status and adequate secondary education qualifications, in addition to five years of continuous service with the United Nations Secretariat by 31 December 1989.

7. As part of the application procedure, all candidates must submit with their applications a translation into Chinese of the English text attached to the application form.

8. All applications will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners. In instances where a large number of applications are received, the Board reserves the right to admit to the examination only the most qualified candidates based on a review of the qualifications that are over and above the minimum criteria set out in paragraph 4. Convoked candidates will be required to submit evidence of degrees, knowledge of languages and/or relevant experience prior to the interview. All applicants will be

[1] "Main language" should be understood to be the language in which the candidate is best able to work. Candidates' claims to Chinese as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

notified of the Board's decision in respect of their application. **The Board's decisions are final.**

9. The written examination, to be held on **24 November 2008**, will consist of five papers:

(a) Translation into Chinese of a general text in English (1 hour). It should be noted that this paper is eliminatory. Only candidates who are successful in this paper will have their other papers marked;

(b) Translation into Chinese of an English transcript of a speech delivered in another official language (1 hour);

(c) Translation into Chinese of a text in English, to be chosen by the candidate from a total of four specialized texts (economic, legal, social or political). Candidates with a degree in law must select the legal text (1 hour);

(d) Translation into English of a general text in Chinese (1 hour);

(e) (Optional for all candidates) Translation into Chinese of a text chosen by the candidate from a total of four texts, one in each of the following official United Nations languages: Arabic, French, Russian or Spanish (1 hour). Although this paper is optional, the language abilities demonstrated will be considered in the overall evaluation of candidates.

10. The use of a dictionary or any other reference material will **not** be permitted during the examination. Similarly, candidates may not use personal computers to prepare their papers.

11. On the basis of the results of the written examination, the Board of Examiners will invite selected candidates to a competency-based interview. The Board will interview each candidate to assess whether she or he possesses the competencies required for the position. Candidates may also be required to take some additional short tests at the time of the interview (including a computer skills test). The interview is an integral part of the examination. Therefore, candidates who are invited for an interview **should not** assume that they will automatically be offered an assignment.

12. On the basis of the overall results of the examination, the Board will recommend to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management the names of candidates who qualify for inclusion in the roster. All candidates admitted to the examination will be informed in writing of the Board's final recommendation in respect of their candidature. **The Board's recommendations are not subject to appeal.** The Board **does not** release individual scores or results.

13. Successful candidates who receive an offer of appointment are strongly encouraged to accept it, as declining may affect their prospects of receiving a subsequent offer.

14. Staff members selected to fill vacancies will be assigned as Chinese-language translators/verbatim reporters for a trial period of two years. Staff members below the P-2 level or who are in the General Service category will receive a special post allowance to the P-2 level. Staff members at the P-2 and P-3 levels will be assigned at their respective levels. Successful candidates are expected to be able to use computer workstations.

15. Successful candidates in translation assigned directly to duty stations away from Headquarters will normally be required to spend the first six months of their trial period in the corresponding service at Headquarters.

16. Staff members with a special post allowance to the P-2 level and those already at the P-2 level who complete the trial period successfully and are recommended by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of Human Resources Management may be promoted to the P-3 level. Staff members already at the P-3 level who complete the trial period successfully will be confirmed in their functions at the P-3 level. Staff members on fixed-term appointment will be eligible to be considered for permanent appointment subject to the requirements of the staff rules in force. Staff members who do not complete the trial period successfully will be reassigned to posts at their previous levels and the special post allowance, if any, will be discontinued.

17. In accordance with the needs of the service/section, successful candidates may be called upon to work outside normal working hours, including weekends and holidays.

18. Staff members applying for the examination should complete the attached form and submit it together with a copy of the P.11 or PHP form and the translation paper referred to in paragraph 7 above, **no later than 3 September 2008**, to:

2008 competitive examination for Chinese-language translators/
verbatim reporters
Examinations and Tests Section
Office of Human Resources Management
Room S-2575
United Nations Secretariat
New York, N.Y. 10017
Fax: 1 212 963 3683
E-mail: OHRM_exam@un.org

Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. To the extent possible, applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their applications early. Applications may be sent by e-mail, fax or mail. Incomplete applications, including those without the translation paper, will **not** be considered.

19. In order to ensure receipt of all applications submitted by staff members from offices away from Headquarters, such staff members are requested to return their applications to the Examinations and Tests Section of the Office of Human Resources Management through the Chief Administrative Officer or Director of the United Nations Information Centre of their respective duty stations by **3 September 2008**, the deadline for receipt of applications in the Examinations and Tests Section.

Application (for staff members of the United Nations Secretariat only)

2008 competitive examination for Chinese-language translators/ verbatim reporters

Index No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Last name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Category ☐☐ Level ☐☐

First name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Male ☐ Female ☐

Date of entry on duty Month ☐☐ Year ☐☐☐☐

Type of contract _____ Expiration date _____

Department/office _____ Duty station _____

Room No. _____ Tel. extension _____ Fax extension _____ E-mail _____

Have you taken this examination before? Yes ☐ Year ☐☐☐☐ No ☐

Have you taken another United Nations competitive examination? Yes ☐ Year ☐☐☐☐ No ☐

If yes, which examination(s)? _____

What is your main language?[a] ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

I will be taking part (e) of the written examination (optional for all candidates) Yes ☐ No ☐

[a] "Main language" should be understood to be the language in which the candidate is best able to work. Candidates' claims to Chinese as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

Please complete an up-to-date P.11 or PHP form and attach it to this application. Describe your educational background and work experience (giving dates and length of time) in the areas of verbatim reporting, editing and translation, if any.

Applications submitted without a P.11 or PHP form or without the translation paper referred to in paragraph 7 will NOT be considered.

I certify that the information I have provided above is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date _____ Signature _____

(When applying by e-mail, type the date and your name above.)

I have read information circular ST/IC/2008/35 and I understand that if I am successful in the 2008 competitive examination for Chinese-language translators/ verbatim reporters and am recommended for inclusion in the roster, my assignment as a Chinese-language translator/verbatim reporter will be subject to my acceptance of the conditions of service indicated in paragraphs 14 to 17 of that circular.

Date _____ Signature _____

(When applying by e-mail, type the date and your name above.)

Text to be translated into Chinese

You must translate *both* topics

Topic 1: Distributive justice

How can the distribution of social goods in a society be just? Utopian visionaries throughout history have given answers to this question and, to the extent to which these answers varied, have set off ideological controversies as well as wars. Questions that need to be settled by dogma or force, however, are liable to have no answers at all. Presumably it is this insight that has led many sober-minded students in the fields of sociology, economics and political science to abandon the question of how distributive justice can be realized, replacing it with the question of why the belief in distributive justice is illusory.

Posed from this perspective the question gains complexity as well as openness. There may be many answers. None of these answers can claim to be the ultimate one, but, summed up, they may contribute to our understanding of the forces inhibiting or facilitating distributive social justice.

I attempt to address one of the many aspects of the illusion of distributive justice, focusing on the conceptual distinction between realizing versus perceiving distributive justice. Distributive social justice is liable to be "illusory" on both accounts. It can be illusory because, contrary to the beliefs we may have, it may be impossible for the distribution of social goods to be just, regardless of what we do. For instance, the "impossibility theorem", according to which collective social welfare functions cannot be determined, is directed towards the destruction of this type of illusion. Distributive justice, however, can also be illusory because the perception we have of it does not mirror reality adequately.

There is a certain causal relationship between the perceptual illusion and the illusory feasibility of distributive justice. Because if we perceive social distributions as just, even though this is not what they are, then nobody will attempt to strive for change. Thus we are left with distributions that are unjust forever. That is, "false" perceptions of distributive justice have social consequences that render the realization of distributive justice impossible.

(330 words)

Topic 2: Global warming

We are now faced with a momentous challenge: global warming. The steady deterioration of the very climate of our very planet is becoming a war of the first order, and by any measure, the United States is losing. The United States produces nearly a quarter of the world's greenhouse gases each year and has stubbornly made it clear that it doesn't intend to do a whole lot about it. Although 174 nations ratified the admittedly flawed Kyoto accords to reduce carbon levels, the United States walked away from them. While even developing China has boosted its mileage standards to 35 mpg, the United States remains the land of the Hummer.

The rub is, if the vast majority of people increasingly agree that climate change is a global emergency, there's far less consensus on how to fix it. Industry offers its plans, which too often would fix little. Environmentalists offer theirs, which too often amount to naive wish lists that could cripple America's growth. But what would an

aggressive, ambitious, effective plan look like — one that would leave us both environmentally safe and economically sound?

Halting climate change will be far harder than even that. One of the more conservative plans for addressing the problem calls for a reduction of 25 billion tons of carbon emissions over the next 50 years. And yet by devising a coherent strategy that mixes short-term solutions with farsighted goals, combines government activism with private-sector enterprise and blends pragmatism with ambition, the United States can, without major damage to the economy, help halt the worst effects of climate change and ensure the survival of our way of life for future generations. Money will get us part of the way there, but what's needed most is will.

(292 words)